

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A computerized method of providing selective command control within a Workflow Management System (WFMS), said WFMS including a model of a business process, the model defining process activities as the nodes of an arbitrary graph, and process control flows as directed edges of the graph, said method comprising the steps of:

upon receipt an issued command directed to an instance of said process-model, determining whether the activity having current control is defined within a command sphere comprising a sub-graph of said arbitrary graph, and

where the activity having current control is defined with a command-sphere, determining whether the issued command is defined as permissible for the activity having current control; and

executing said issued command, if it is defined in the command sphere as a permissible command.

2. A method according to claim 1 wherein the command sphere further includes definitions of substitute actions and the method comprises the further steps of:

where the issued command is not found to be defined as a permissible command, determining whether a substitute action is defined; and

where a substitute action is defined, executing that substitute action.

3. A method according to either claim 1 or 2 wherein the command sphere is completely included within a second command sphere and said method includes the further step of using the definitions of the included command sphere if a conflict exists between the definitions of permissible actions in the two command spheres.

4. A computerized method of providing selective command control within a WFMS according to claim 2 wherein said command-sphere overlaps a third

command-sphere with the activity having current control being defined in both command spheres and wherein the method comprises the further step of executing the issued command only if the command is defined as permissible in both of the command spheres.

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